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THE PROBLEM IN WILBRANDT'S *MEISTER VON PALMYRA*

In 1889, the very year in which Hauptmann produced *Vor Sonnen-aufgang* and Arno Holz brought out *Die Familie Selicke*, the two plays which marked the capture of the German stage by naturalism, there was acted a work which foreshadowed the downfall of the very literary movement then just coming into its own. Adolf Wilbrandt's *Der Meister von Palmyra* was one of the first of those symbolic and idealistic works which came as a natural reaction to the *Alkoholiker-dramen* of the eighties and early nineties, which Hauptmann himself adopted in *Hanneles Himmelfahrt* and *Die Versunkene Glocke*, and which, spreading to every land, have reached their highest development in the plays of Maeterlinck. *Der Meister von Palmyra* is philosophical in theme, poetic in treatment, and far from dramatic in structure, yet the strength of the underlying idea and the beauty and stage-mastery with which it is worked out unite to make it a play popular not only with a limited class of readers as a closet-drama, but also a success when competently produced behind the footlights. That Wilbrandt has succeeded in a theme so beset with difficulties is a tribute both to his own genius and to the perspicacity of the audiences before whom it has been presented.

Though it in no sense degenerates into didacticism, *Der Meister von Palmyra* is most strongly a *Tendenzstück*. Unlike the model which certain critics hold up, it originates in and develops around a central

problem. That Wilbrandt has succeeded in reducing one more artistic canon to the dust it deserves is due not only to his own power, but also to the grandeur and the far-reaching importance of the theme to which he has subordinated his characters. For the problem in *Der Meister von Palmyra* is the fundamental problem which has troubled every thoughtful man since the first human being, perched in the tree tops, thought reflectively at all; it is the problem which has lain at the base of every philosophy and religion since time began. It is the perennial, ever-propounded problem which each of us must solve in the depths of his own heart as best he can: it is the great problem of life and death.

What makes the play so interesting and helpful to us is the fact that the poet actually lived through the experiences recorded in his pages; the solution that he gives is a thoughtful man's answer to the riddle of the universe as it has presented itself to him through long years of experience. It is the crystallization of all his thought and poetry, handled with the best technique at his command, and as such deservedly marks the highest point of his genius. *Der Meister von Palmyra* could only have sprung from a varied spiritual experience based on intellectual foundations as broad as Wilbrandt's.

At twenty-two a Doctor of Philosophy, a jurisconsult and a philologist, an expert in Roman law and in languages and literatures, in Hegelian philosophy and in Egyptology, in the history of art and in the history of man, he was, from 1859 to 1880, a publicist, a journalist, and a playwright. With the publication of his novel *Geister und Menschen* dates the beginning of his literary work. *Arria und Messalina* and *Nero*, two Roman plays, first brought him into prominence as a dramatist, and led to his engagement in 1881 as the director of the Vienna Burgtheater, where he produced more Roman dramas and German patriotic pieces.

This practical theatrical experience, though of inestimable value to his technique, became irksome to his poet's soul, and in 1887 he resigned his position. Rejoicing in his new-found freedom, Wilbrandt spent the next summer in the romantic Salzkammergut, at picturesque Hallein. Here, in the companionship of his friends Franz Lenbach and Reinhold Begas, he meditated much on the subject nearest his heart, and one night, looking up at the innumerable starry

points twinkling in the black-arched dome of the heavens, he resolved to write a drama on the great mystery of life and death. His theatrical experience had taught him that any subject, if but handled aright, was possible upon the stage; and in 1889 *Der Meister von Palmyra* was the result.

The great problem of the play is the problem which Life feels when it comes into contact with Death. There is in mankind a strong, firmly rooted attachment to life. Few of us have as yet come to sympathize with Hardy's "coming universal desire not to live." Man is willing, if in a healthy state of mind, to struggle to the utmost to preserve the divine spark within his breast. Athwart this deep-seated instinct of the human soul falls the black shadow of death. Man is limited in existence to the brief span of three score years and ten; then he must die, no matter what his rank, his power, or his desserts. From the beginning of time thoughtful men have moralized upon this inevitable factor in human existence. In Tennyson's noble words,

Man comes, and tills the field, and lies beneath.

This seems to comprise the life of man; it is essentially the same for all, whether embodied in a moralizing Johnson's *Vanity of Human Wishes* or in the drama of an Andreyev. Death is the final goal of Life.

The great problem has been, therefore, to reconcile these two seemingly incompatible facts. Man's spirit stubbornly refuses to concede that death ends all, and religions and philosophies have sprung up to explain away death. Why does it exist? Is it the end? The first of these problems Wilbrandt explains in the only possible way, by dwelling on the necessity of death. Eternal physical life in this world would be impossible. To exemplify this he gives us the character of Apelles, who has the boon of eternal existence. Empires rise and fall, religions change, generations are born, grow to manhood, and pass away; Apelles remains the same. And what has he for his pains? A living death! Life without progress is not life at all; Death must exist.

Having disposed of the first question by showing the absolute necessity for physical death, Wilbrandt advances another step. Does

the necessary *Sorgenlöser*, Death, defeat forever the soul's cry for continued existence? Wilbrandt answers in a decided negative. He attempts no elaborate elucidation of this point; the absolute certainty with which he expects some form of future life is based upon the inward conviction of the soul. Thus, when Apelles in the first scene asks Zoë whether she is certain of immortality:

Wirst du so leicht das sichre Leben hin
Für das, was niemand kennt? Die blühnde Jugend,
Der Glieder Kraft und Schönheit, Aug' und Ohr
Und Fühlen, Denken, Lieben für ein dunkel,
Geträumt "Vielleicht"? (Browning's "Grand Perhaps")

Zoë's firm answer is:

Dir mag es dunkel sein, mir nicht.

And in the last act, when Apelles' spiritual development is complete, he also scorns the fool whose only cry is, "Eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die." Life persists after the grave in some form. But in what?

There are only two views possible: continued existence apart from this life, in a static condition, or reincarnation in some form of physical and progressive existence; the third, the Buddhistic Nirvana, in which the soul is reabsorbed into the world-spirit, is not immortality in the ordinary sense. Which of these two shall we accept? The first has been the traditional view of Christianity; the second, that of the great religions of the East. To modern eyes there seems at first glance little doubt as to which is preferable. But Wilbrandt says no; the only logical and satisfactory conception of immortality is reincarnation. Hence he introduces, as a contrast to Apelles, the figure of one soul appearing in a different guise in each act, first as the Christian martyr Zoë, then the Roman courtesan Phoebe, then Christian Persida, the youth Nymphas, and, last of all, Zenobia. She is the true immortality,

Abbild des ewig neugeformten Lebens.

Life as constant, active progress is opposed to the stagnation, on the one hand, of the foolish desire to live forever in this life, represented by Apelles, and on the other, of the life of eternal bliss which the church has offered, represented in the play by the doctrines of early Christianity.

What, then, does *Der Meister von Palmyra* offer us on the philosophical side? First of all, an ideal, poetical, immanent world-spirit or over-soul, exhibiting itself in this life in man:

Und all die Menschenseelen sind verschieden
Gefärbte Gläser, die der eine Geist
Des Lebens—nenn ihn, wie du willst—durchleuchtet.
Der steht, unsichtbar, hinter jeglichem,
Sein wahres Ich, und lebt in uns sein Leben.

So much for God; as for the immortal soul of man,

Sollt' es dauern, müsst' es
Im Wechsel blüh'n, wie du! von Form zu Form
Das enge Ich erweiternd, füllend, läuternd,
Bis sich's in reinem Licht verklärt. So könnten wir
Vielleicht, allmählich, Gott entgegenreifen.

We have an example of this true immortality in the quintuple figure of the heroine who shows the false earthly eternal life, personified in Apelles, its mistake, and opposes the equally false Christian eternal heavenly bliss, which is merely Apelles transferred to another sphere. Such is the philosophic import, the plot of ideas.

It is hard for us, to be sure, not to laugh at this ludicrous idea of metempsychosis; it is really too preposterous for a modern German to hold it up as an ideal. Still, we must recognize that in times gone by it has been one of the vital philosophic beliefs. Indeed, the great Asiatic religions of Brahminism and Buddhism, comprising the majority of mankind, believe today in the transmigration of souls, and even in Europe and this country, where we profess to be enlightened, it flourishes as one of the cardinal doctrines of the theosophists. Hence after all, because of its wide extent in the past and even today, it merits more attention than has ordinarily been given it by modern scholars.

Belief in the teaching variously denominated as reincarnation, transmigration, or metempsychosis, is almost as old as mankind. We find the earliest peoples holding that the human soul, when it leaves this body in death, reappears on earth once more in the form of some new-born babe; in the lowest peoples, and in the exoteric practice of some of the higher, the belief is that the soul can reappear in the body of an animal. But such perversions of the doctrine we

must in all fairness exclude from any philosophic consideration; it is as unfair to judge it from the belief of the Hindu coolie as it would be to judge Christianity from the practice of a southern negro, rather than to try to penetrate into its esoteric principles.

In fact, in the ancient world, whoever made any pretense to intellectual power rejected the joyless life of the shades, which constituted the popular hereafter for the Greek and Roman, and if he believed in any life to come, he adopted some form of metempsychosis. The Orphic cults, which played so important a rôle in the religious life of Hellas, gained much of their power from the metempsychosis doctrine that they offered their initiates. Pythagoras reveled in it; and we all know the wonderful use to which Plato put it, in his Myth of Er and elsewhere. Among classic philosophers, Empedocles, Vergil, Philo, the neo-Pythagoreans, the neo-Platonists, Origen, the Gnostics, and the Manichaeans adhered to some form of transmigration. The ancient religions of the world nearly all embody it: the Persian Magi, the gymnosophists of India, the Druids, the bardic triads of the Welsh, the priestly rites of Egyptian Isis, the Eleusinian mysteries of Greece, the Bacchic processions of Rome, the cabalistic rituals of the Hebrews, the religions of Peru and Mexico—all are imbued with the teaching. And even today, it prevails in India, Burma, Tibet, China, and Japan. In fact, it is hardly exaggeration to say that, with the exception of those peoples who have come under the domination of Christianity, belief in metempsychosis has been and is well-nigh universal.

Nor has it been absent in Christians. Some of the greatest philosophers have adhered to the theory; Bruno, Kant, Schelling, and Fichte accepted it. Hume himself says: "The soul, if immortal, existed before our birth. Metempsychosis is the only system of immortality that Philosophy can hearken to." Schopenhauer's philosophy included palingenesis as one of its cardinal principles; he calls it "the natural conviction of Man so soon as he reflects freely." Lessing defends it in his *Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts*; Herder professed it; Goethe's *Erdgeist* sing of it.

Among poets especially the belief has been very prevalent. Whittier, Aldrich, Longfellow, Lowell, Worsdworth, Tennyson, Rossetti, Coleridge, Browning, Shelley, Emerson—these are but a few who

have hearkened to its call. We may well close our survey of its extent with America's greatest poet, who sings:

As to you, Life, I reckon you are the leavings of many deaths.
No doubt I have died myself ten thousand times before.
I know I am deathless.

In the face of this imposing array, we can better appreciate the importance of the solution Wilbrandt gives to the problem of death. It is one of the great answers of the ages, excluded from our thought only because of the force of traditional Christianity. It is coming more and more to the fore now; it has already left the domain of theoretical metaphysical speculation and appeared in popular form in *The Star-Rover* of Jack London, in the novels of Algernon Blackwood in England, in Flammarion's works in France, and here in Wilbrandt's *Meister von Palmyra* in Germany.

Upon closer examination the doctrine of reincarnation does hold forth great plausibility. The highest human spirits have demanded a something after this life. Almost without exception the great philosophers and the great poets are united in the contention that the cessation of the physical life does not mean the end of the spiritual. If you once grant any kind of immortality, it follows with logical precision that Hume was right, and metempsychosis must be adopted. If the soul is to live forever after death, it must have lived forever before birth. What is eternal life that excludes the eternity before the present? Science itself contends for it. The cardinal principle of the physical universe is the law of the conservation of energy. If we are to apply this to the spiritual realm also, it means of necessity that the vital principle exhibiting itself as consciousness must exist in some form after it departs from the body, and it must have existed before. If, on the other hand, the law of the conservation of energy does not hold in the spiritual realm, then there must be spiritual laws which do; and the strongest of these is the continuity of personality. Granted the animism on which immortality depends, reincarnation would seem to be most in accord with scientific principles.

The modern conception of life is essentially one of growth. Life absolutely static is impossible to conceive. Modern scientific thought offers us life as a progress, an evolution from lower to higher, steadily approaching an unattainable goal. And this is exactly what

reincarnation offers on the spiritual side. An ego, eternally existent, a manifestation of the Divine, what Wilbrandt calls "ein gefärbtes Glas, das der eine Geist des Lebens durchleuchtet," gradually evolves through many existences until at length it resides as the soul of a man. After the physical garment wears out, is this ego to be lifted at once to flowery beds of ease, or doomed to eternal torture? Both mediæval conceptions are alike repugnant to modern thought. The soul must continue to progress after this life.

To exemplify this false theory of future life, Wilbrandt introduces the Christian fanatics, and, in a symbolic sense, the living death of Apelles himself. The hero realizes, at last, his folly, and cries aloud:

So wie die Geister von Gestorbnen, die
Man nicht begrub, die Todesstätte, sagt man,
Ruhlos umkreisen, so umwandr' ich, ein
Lebendig Toter!

The heaven of Zoë, the heaven which inspires the fanaticism of Herennianos, leader of the church at Palmyra, is presided over by a *Zorngott*; and Apelles says:

Das Heilige wird
In euch zum Wahnsitz, heiss wie Wüstenwind.

In fact, Wilbrandt's treatment of early Christianity is most fruitful. Its conception of immortality arose in response to a vital need of the peoples of the Roman Empire. With all initiative crushed by the repression of a vast military tyranny, life ceased to offer any attractions. Stoicism and Epicureanism arose to teach man to make the best of a very bad business; they brought escape from the outside world through withdrawal into the inner soul. Christianity, the Christianity of the Fathers, offered instead the hope of eternal happiness in another world. No wonder it far outstripped those sects which could offer only consolation in this world. So mediaeval Christianity became what Ruskin calls the great "Religion of Consolation." To the oppressed it made its appeal. They sought an escape from the world; Christianity offered them the dream of heaven. Hence the monasteries of the Middle Ages and hence their insolent criminals, their ascetic saints dreaming of eternal glory and their cruel tyrants oppressing, plundering, poisoning; hence all

of that curious religion which permitted the most unbounded evils to occur at a time when, probably, there were more spiritually minded men in the world than ever before. The Christianity of the church,

gleich dem Adler,
Der sich emporschraubt in das Blau des Himmels,
Bis er dem Aug' des Sterblichen entschwindet,

forgot the earth in contemplating heaven. Meanwhile, the Christianity of Jesus had practically died out with his disciples, overshadowed by the other and to that age greater interest of immortality introduced by the Greek Fathers; however, it is probable that without this adventitious element, Jesus himself would long ago have been forgotten. We are just beginning to realize today that the religion of Jesus has never yet been tried, and that the greatest misfortune that ever happened to Christianity has been the church and the theologians. As our own Edgar Lee Masters has said, Christ's message was just gaining headway when

Along came Paul, and nearly spoiled it all.

It is against such a deadening mediaeval conception of eternal bliss that Wilbrandt and reincarnation protest. The ego cannot die, but neither can it live statically. Any conception which takes the soul's interest from this world and makes life depend for its value on the hope of happiness hereafter, the very basis of which is false, is radically wrong, and any Christianity which depends for its support on such an erroneous doctrine is doomed. If immortality is to remain amid the simple teachings of human brotherhood and divine fatherhood which constituted the fundamentals of Christ's message, it must be in some other form than the "Christian's" heaven and hell.

What solution does reincarnation offer? It tells us that the soul, after completing one life, experiences another, and another, always rising in the scale and always approaching the ideal, in accordance with the recognized principles of evolution. Life is an opportunity for growth, a something to be grasped eagerly and experienced to the full. Just as the physical body of the child depends directly on what the physical experience of the ancestors has been, so the spiritual constitution of the reborn soul is directly affected by all the experiences of its past lives. Life is not something to escape from;

it is something to grow into. The better we live physically, the better will be the bodies of our offspring; the nobler we live spiritually, the nobler will be our characters in the next life. "Salvation" becomes, not getting saved from "original sin," but developing character, growing nobler; every man has to be "saved" from the self he is when he enters the world by leaving it a nobler being. The best way of growing is the way of Jesus: unselfish service for others.

This conception is inherently probable because it explains many hitherto inexplicable facts of life. It makes clear those intimations of a former life, which Wordsworth and multitudes of others have experienced. It explains genius and how a Mozart could compose operas at four, because of the long practice he had in former lives. But the most important problem it solves is the age-long riddle of evil. Evils and hardships are tests and formers of character; only as we live and learn can we fulfil our great duty of growing. What we are in this life depends upon what we were in the last, and what we shall be in the next depends upon what we do and learn in this.

So much for the probabilities of the case; modern philosophy tells us that no belief, such as immortality, incapable of logical or scientific proof or disproof, can be accepted if it does not pass the pragmatic test: are its results desirable? Those of the mediaeval immortality were not; hence "practical philosophy" has rejected the entire conception, in spite of the evidence in its favor. But reincarnation escapes this difficulty. It conserves the values both of a continued existence and of an intense interest in this life.

Against the old idea Apelles objects:

Ist alles,
Was wir bezeugen durch die Tat des Lebens,
Wie nicht getan?

In the play it is the old conception that leads to Zoë's martyrdom; it produces the tragedy of the fanatic Herennianos on Apelles' wife Persida. We are shown the folly to which it can lead, in theory to Apelles' living death, in practice to the fanaticism of the early Christians. Both of these difficulties reincarnation obviates; it provides a future life of growth, instead of stagnation, and it centers interest in this present life here and now, for the two are one and the same. This life is a future life for all of us, and our future life will

resemble this one. Hence, in the Life Spirit's charge to Zoë all those elements combine which would pragmatically force us to adopt Wilbrandt's theory:

Doch die du so leicht das Leben
Hingibst für den Traum des Himmels:
Dich, im Namen des Allmächt'gen,
Ruf' ich auf zu hohen Wundern,
Werkzeug du des ewigen Willens.
Wiederkehren wirst du! nicht
So, doch anders; Abbild des
Ewig neugeformten Lebens,—
Den zu führen, zu belehren,
Der in sich verharren will.

Reincarnation, then, as the belief of the majority of mankind, in the past and in the present, as the scientific, evolutionary conception of immortality, as the most probable solution of the great problem of evil, as the explanation of many of the questions which science gives up in despair, finally, as that belief which pragmatically unites all the values accruing from a belief in immortality with all the values resulting from the belief that our life must be measured by its activity in this world—reincarnation may be said to have a fairly strong case in its favor.

For purposes of illustrating his point and because of the inevitable limitations of the stage, Wilbrandt has, of course, narrowed down his conception to an impossible degree. There is no probability that even if souls should return to other bodies there could ever occur five successive reincarnations so close together in time or in space. Indeed, the probability, if we should accept the theory, is altogether against any soul ever returning to this particular world at all. The important part of Wilbrandt's message is not that we are likely to meet once more in other guises our lost loves, or to revisit the scenes of other lives; it is the fundamental consideration that any future life must be a life of growth, in conditions at least approximating those found on this globe.

Perhaps the best comment on the entire subject is that which Wilbrandt puts into the mouth of one of his characters, old Saltner, in his novel *Adams Söhne*: "Ob er recht hat mit seinem Glauben? Wer weiss es? Ich weiss nur, dass es gut ist, so zu leben, als hätte er

recht: uns so reif zu machen, wie wir irgend können, so menschlich, so gut zu werden, als in uns gelegt is."

We have thus far treated *Der Meister von Palmyra* purely as a philosophical work, as the exemplification of a powerful but somewhat strange idea. It is right that we have done so, for it is primarily for its philosophical interest that Wilbrandt wrote his drama and that it interests us. But there is also a second side to it, more important to some readers than the first: the *Meister von Palmyra* is also a work of art. Only extraordinary artistic ability could have made it the dramatic success that it has proved to be. Plays of so philosophic a nature are understood by few and appreciated by still fewer, so that the success it achieved is a triumph for Wilbrandt's technical skill.

There are immense difficulties in the plan as Wilbrandt conceived it. A play extending over a hundred years demands a large and confusing cast and is likely to lose interest. Each act is a small drama in itself, requiring an exposition, a plot, and a climax. There is the constant danger that the similarity in the acts, in each of which a new figure must be introduced and carried off by Pausanias, will become too monotonous. The author is more to be congratulated on the wonderful ease with which he has avoided these pitfalls incident to his self-imposed limitations than to be assailed for the essentially undramatic nature of his plot. Its very novelty and hazard lend it a charm. There is no preaching and no arguing on the stage. He hints at his thought, and develops it by illustration, but he gives no formal arguments. The reader is left to draw his own conclusions; the only place where the philosopher too far overshadows the poet is toward the end of the last act.

The scene is laid in Palmyra, the "Queen of the Desert," a most fitting and romantic locality for such a tale. The time, too, gives opportunity for introducing the many changes in life and religion which contrast with Apelles' static existence. Embracing the reigns of Diocletian, of Constantine, of Julian the Apostate and his successor, it shows us empires rising and falling, religions changing and persecuting, while the Master of Palmyra lives on unmoved.

The action opens after the city has been rebuilt, following its destruction by Aurelian, by the famous architect Apelles, "Meister von Palmyra." He is at the heyday of his fame; young, healthy,

happy, he enjoys life as only the true Greek can. He loves his fond mother and his native city, and is proud to live as its leader.

The scene opens near a cave in the desert just outside the city. Here dwells a powerful spirit who can dispense life at will. Occasionally, however, those who seek life from him are met instead by the Spirit of Death, Pausanias or *der Sorgenlöser*. Thither comes an aged couple, who, despite all the evils of life, despite blindness and decrepitude, still desire the boon of living. Thus at the very outset Willbrandt introduces the theme of the play, the struggle of man against death, and hints at the solution. It is Pausanias who comes and asks the couple why they seek to prolong their miserable existence. But the old woman answers:

Man lebt doch, Herr, so gern. Und sterben ist
So schaurig.

And Pausanias gives the true answer to the longing for continual life here on earth:

Fallen muss das welche Laub,
Damit andres keim' und wachse!

This small incident at the very outset epitomizes the drama.

To this cave comes a young Christian, Zoë, bent on gaining a martyr's crown at Palmyra. She represents the ideal which would give up this world for another.

Apelles, the conquering hero who finds life sweet, in all the abandon of youth comes to beg that his joyous existence be made eternal. His companion, Longinus, already a thoughtful youth and a budding philosopher, warns him that fortune may change, but Apelles will listen to nothing; he wants Life, and will have it. The Spirit of Life, whom he evokes, also warns him:

Doch gib acht!
Leben ohne Ende kann
Reue werden ohne Ende.
Drum gib acht!

but he grants his request. Apelles is confident;

Arbeit und Genuss
Sind Zwillingsbrüder, eins im andern lebend;
Ich leb' in beiden, und sie hüten mir
Die Lust des Daseins.

The Spirit, having granted his wish, dooms him to eternal life:

An der Stirn gezeichnet wirst du
Wachen ohne Schlaf des Todes—
Allen Kindern dieser Erde
Du ein Bildnis, du ein Beispiel,
Das des Todes Lehre predigt,
Das des Lebens Rätsel lichtet.

He then connects Zoë's doom inextricably with Apelles:

Folg ihm nach!
Deinen Todesweg zu wandeln,
Ihm zu künden sein Geschick.—
Wandre du von Form zu Form,
Strebend leichtbeschwingte Seele!
Irre wandelnd, vorwärts schreitend,
Und in jeder deiner Formen
Ihm begegnend, neu und fremd,
Unbewusst dem Unbewussten—
Bis sich Gottes Werk vollendet,—
Folg den Männern nach Palmyra,
Geh zu sterben!

This first scene is really the prelude to the play: it introduces the problem and the chief characters and forecasts the solution. There follow five separate actions, centering around the martyrdom of Zoë, the infidelity and death of Apelles' mistress Phoebe, the tragedy and death of his Christian wife Persida, the death of his grandson Nymphas in defense of the old gods; and, finally, the postlude, in which Zenobia meets the now world-weary Apelles and gives him death. In each act Pausanias appears, in one guise or another; until the last Apelles resolutely repels him. As time goes on the master is increasingly conscious of the identity of the five figures he loves, till in the last scene the truth bursts upon him. Like the Wandering Jew, doomed to walk the earth unceasingly, he finally comes to long for death, but only after all his friends have died and his grandson has been killed. Unlike the Wandering Jew, he does not sink to rest as a refuge from life forevermore, but drinks of the waters of Lethe only to return again in some other form:

O Wunderrätsel du, das meinen Weg
So oft verwandelt kreuzte; holde Flamme
Des vielgestaltigen Lebens! Nun erfass' ich

Des hohen Meisters Meinung,—ach, zu spät.
 Eng ist des Menschen Ich, nur eine kann es
 Von tausend Formen fassen und entfalten,
 Nur eine Strasse geh'n; drum tracht' es nicht
 Ins lebenwimmelnde Meer der Ewigkeit,
 Das Gott nur ausfüllt!—Sollt' es dauern, müsst' es
 Im Wechsel blüh'n, wie du! von Form zu Form
 Das enge Ich erweiternd, füllend, läuternd,
 Bis sich's in reinem Licht verklärt. So könnten wir
 Vielleicht, allmählich, Gott entgegenreifen.

The first episode, at the end of Act I, introduces to us a number of characters who pursue their course throughout the play, dying off one by one according to their respective ages. The most interesting is Apelles' steward Timolaos, whose shrewd insight and biting wit have earned for him the name of *die Nessel*. His wit is the only humor in the play; and it is generally too acrimonious to approach the comical. His remark on the Roman captain Saturninus, after he has just been most lavish in his praise of Apelles and Palmyra, aptly hits the point: "Ein kluger Mann, dieser Saturninus. Wie herablassend er uns schmeichelt. Kluge Schufte, die Römer!" And he well characterizes the two ambitious and selfish men whom we shall meet later: "Der ehrgeizige Julius Aurelius Wahballath mit dem neidsauren Lächeln, und der schöne Septimius Malku, in dessen schmale Hand so viel Gold hineingeht und so wenig heraus—seine Freunde, die auf seinem Adlerrücken mit emporgeflogen sind."

Pausanias appears in the latter part of this scene, disguised as the minstrel whom Apelles had heard in camp, and his influence soon pervades the entire action. The reader can feel his presence, though he is not mentioned by name. Once more he warns Apelles of his rash desire for life, but to no avail. The act closes with a very dramatic action in which Zoë is stoned to death. The heated arguments between the heathen and Christian leaders give opportunity for the discussion of "Christianity's" ideals in those early days; they lend a naturalness to the scene. Another homely touch, which reveals Apelles' pride, is the way in which he protects Zoë from the mob until she assails his work and prophesies the fall of his temple—that is too much! Zoë dies cursing Apelles, while taciturn Pausanias stands by and says: "Du hast nun, was du wolltest."

The second episode takes place some twenty years later. Everyone, save Apelles, has changed. Rome is at her height, Constantine is on the throne, Christianity has triumphed. Aurelius and Septimius have risen to the first places in Palmyra and now despise Apelles, the ladder by which they climbed. Longinus, in middle age, is a mature philosopher; Timolaos' words are more biting than ever. The Master has been in Rome and returned with a beautiful courtesan, Phoebe. This long introduction is effected in the most natural manner and is worthy of Wilbrandt's best technique.

Phoebe is a beautiful creature of imperial Rome, sighing for her city, pouting, longing for the wealth and luxury to which she has been accustomed. A light, frivolous butterfly, there remain in her soul traces of a nobility recollected from her previous existence. When Timolaos' stinging remarks on the vacillation of Aurelius amid the changing religions arouse the latter's ire, so that he seizes the opportunity to charge Apelles with embezzlement, the Master, with the nobility of character accorded him throughout the play, resolves to pay the unjust amount though it ruin him. Phoebe struggles between her better self and her desire to run off with Septimius, who has tempted her with luxury and Rome. A dim sense of goodness seems to come back to her; she cajoles and flatters Apelles, who has discovered the plot, and in this instant he wonders:

Und warum mahnt mich diese Schläfrin, die
Mein Herz berauscht, an jenes Kind des Todes?
Als wär's derselbe Geist in beiden Formen?

He has been thinking of Zoë.

Phoebe soon gives way to Septimius, but falls sick and is claimed by the physician Pausanias. Although bereft of loved ones and wealth, Apelles is still firm in his defiance of death. This second episode is one of the best in the play. The tender lines with which Phoebe is drawn, the noble portrayal of Apelles, the gibes of Timolaos, the "Pelican philosopher," Longinus—all make it of great dramatic interest in itself.

Episode three opens. Christianity is firm. Rome has fallen, and Constantinople is now the seat of empire. Aurelius is Wahbalath once more, Septimius is Malku; otherwise they are little changed. Timolaos, now old, has been converted. "Wir gehen alle nach

Brot," he remarks, "und das Brot wird christlich." Longinus is the wise old father of Jamlichus; Apelles is married to a Christian wife, Persida. But now the curse begins to take effect, for, fixed in bodily vigor, he is also static mentally; his whole being has stopped growing. A living death is approaching. Still clinging to the old gods, he builds basilicas for the Christians, who, outwardly honoring his talent, inwardly despise him. But he prides himself on this very fatal defect in his character:

Hier steh' ich—grau, nicht alt; im festen Bau
 Unsterblich Mark, so scheint es; doch erfahren,
 Beruhigt, weise—Lieb' und Leidenschaft
 Dämmern so ferne—und der Zeiten Hammer
 Rings um mich schmiedet eine neue Welt.

Persida is a second, matured Zoë; her experience as Phoebe has done wonders. Her husband meditates:

Wie du der Phoebe glichst; doch ernster, edler—
 Doch auch ein heimlich Feuer tief im Aug'.

He seems to see Phoebe in her, she feels her kinship herself; while even her brother notices something strange about her. As she develops spiritually, she is coming to remember more and more of her past existences.

Across the story falls the black shadow of Christianity. On top now, it is persecuting in its turn; old Herennianos can flatter Apelles in one breath, while in the next he is plotting to place his daughter in a cloister, take away his wife, and kill him himself. The clash comes when Apelles wishes his Christian daughter to marry the pagan son of his old friend Longinus. Herennianos interferes, and the struggle in Persida between love for Apelles and devotion to the fanatical ideal of the church kills her. She is conquered by Pausanias, but Apelles keeps his Tryphena and defies death to his face:

Gespenst des Abgrunds!—
 Du auch hier? Rabe, der das Opfer wittert?—
 Bin ich unsterblich, bin ich stark wie du,
 Bin Herr des Todes! Nieder, Höllengeist,
 Auf deine Kniee!

The irony is all the more poignant because the death he despises is the living death which stares him in the face; actual death is the true *Sorgenlöser*.

The best of the third act is the stirring scene where the fanatic mob seeks to tear Tryphena from Apelles' arms. Amid the most dramatic action Wilbrandt brings out the base ends to which the theological immortality of the church can descend.

In the fourth episode Longinus alone, of all Apelles' friends, is left, now a hoary graybeard. The Master, a goatherd now in the mountains, is still happy: "Zeitlos leben, wie wir, ist des Menschen Glück! Streit und Not hatten wir genug; lange, ruhlose Irrfahrt durch der Menschen Länder! Hier krächzt uns die Sorge nicht an, und die Wünsche schlafen." He has come to the Stoic ideal. At the same time he has almost realized the true form of eternal life:

Seit ich wie die Adler lebe, die Welt von oben betrachte, besuchen mich in stillen Nächten wunderliche Gedanken. Nicht wiederkommen? Warum? Die Weisen in Indien sagen: wir werden sein—und sind schon gewesen! Langsam, sagen sie, reift der Menschengeist, nicht in Einem Leben. Um gottähnlich zu werden, muss er durch viele und mannigfalte Gestalten gehen. . . . Warum könn't nicht sein?—Wenn ich zuweilen daliege und mir sage: Wer war wohl jene Zoë, mit dem Geisterblick? Und Phoebe, und Persida—wanderte in ihnen Zoës Seele weiter? Und du, mein Nymphas, mein Liebling—hätte ich auch dich schon gekannt?—Zuweilen ist mir, als hätte ich dich schon gekannt.

Nymphas, Apelles' grandson, is the form that the reincarnated soul takes this time. Young, fresh manhood is his, as charming in his way as Zoë and Phoebe were in theirs. He is all fire, vigor, idealism. All of Apelles' love is concentrated in this boy; but Pausanias, now a Greek musician, appears, and we know that he is doomed. *Der Sorgenlöser* sings:

Also will's der ewige Zeus: du musst nun
Niedersteigen under die blühende Erde,
Musst die dunkle Persephoneia küssen,
Schöner Adonis.

Julian the Apostate is on the throne; the old gods are about to be restored. With all the fire of youth Nymphas enters into the plot. Apelles, grown wise, asks: "Kind! O Kind! Wollt ihr das Rad zurückdrehen?" Julian dies, the spirited attack fails, and Nymphas is killed in Apelles' arms. At last he turns to death as a solace:

So will ich sterben! So verfluch' ich
Dies Leben, das nicht endet!—Tod! wo bist du!

Zeig' mir dein Angesicht! Kannst du ihn töten,
 So töte mich mit ihm!—Heran, ihr alle;
 Hier biet' ich euch die unbewahrte Brust—
 Hier, hier! stoss zu!

But it is useless; he cannot die.

In the fifth episode Apelles has become a second Wandering Jew. He passes mournfully among the ruins of the once proud city of Palmyra, and in a long and impassioned address begs release from the troubles of life:

Longinus starb,—ich nicht! Die Müden sterben,
 Die Weinenden, die Lachenden—Geschlechter
 Und Völker sterben—Tempel stürzen nieder—
 Ich nicht! Ich nicht! Wie Mond und Sterne rollt
 Mein Leben weiter; hoch am Himmel steht
 Geschrieben: "ewig!" und durchflammt die Nacht,
 In der ich ruhlos wandre.

Pausanias appears to taunt him with his former defiance, but Apelles answers:

Nur der kann leben, der in andern lebt,
 An andern wächst, mit andern sich erneut.

But Pausanias cannot help him; only the woman who damned him can unseal his doom.

She appears as Zenobia, a Christian saint, surrounded by worshipers. At last the two souls recognize each other. "Intimations of immortality" flit through Zenobia's brain; and at length all is clear to Apelles. He realizes that true life must be progress upward, in varying forms and under varying guises. The theme of the play receives its last expression, and Zenobia releases Apelles finally to the waiting Pausanias.

There is one charge that has been brought against Wilbrandt, that he should have made Apelles receive eternal happiness together with health and strength, and converted him to a longing for death purely by the monotony of a static, timeless, subjective existence. Unfortunately, this mode of treatment would be impossible on the stage. As it is, I think Wilbrandt has made his point sufficiently clear. Apelles is happy until he drifts out of the onsweping stream of mankind. It is his inability to advance to Christianity that causes

his first real unhappiness, while the culminating blow is merely the fact that he has outlived all his friends. How, I should like to ask, could Apelles wish death if he never became unhappy or dissatisfied with life?

I think I have sufficiently pointed out the beauties and value of *Der Meister von Palmyra* as a piece of dramatic literature. I trust that I have made it clear why, at least, Wilbrandt could have believed in the theory of reincarnation so strongly as to write a play upon the subject. But even if we do not sympathize with his solution of the world-old problem of life and death, *Der Meister von Palmyra* will still hold a great message for us. It is possible to interpret the play in a sense entirely symbolical. Life is constant, progressive activity. Apelles then symbolizes the false idea of life, which seeks to isolate itself from all others, to live for and in itself, to drift out of the on-flowing current of mankind and live in a static condition. Such a life would be truly death. Zoë and her successive changes, on the other hand, can be taken to typify the true life, always a growth and a progress, ever-changing, ever taking on new forms, never at rest but always active. Only so far as life is growth and offers something toward which to move is it of any value. As Browning's Andrea del Sarto says,

Ah, but a man's reach must still exceed his grasp!

Taken in either sense, Wilbrandt's drama will well repay careful study and become a constant source of delight. But I cannot help feeling that it only reaches its truest and greatest appeal and becomes of the utmost value to mankind when we recognize, besides the merely symbolic wealth at our disposal, the doctrine of reincarnation itself as the sanest, the most appealing, and the most helpful solution to the age-long mystery of the Whence and the Whither.

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STUDIES IN THE MIND OF ROMANTICISM

- I. ROMANTIC MOTIVES OF CONDUCT IN CONCRETE DEVELOPMENT—*CONCLUDED*
2. THE DETERMINING FACTORS IN THE ACTIONS AND STRUCTURE OF KLEIST'S DRAMAS

Literary composition becomes now the principal expression of Kleist's life. The direct self-interpretation conveyed through letters, which are addressed henceforth almost exclusively to his sister Ulrike, is fragmentary and generally limited to external conditions.

The part of our problem which still remains is whether the extreme Romanticism reached on the Aar island is really the final conclusion of his development, or the turning-point which marks the beginning of a reaction toward greater objectivity. This problem presents itself concretely as the question whether and in what particular respects the motives which spontaneously determined the mind and will of Kleist in the crucial period of his development remain the decisive motives also of his principal creative characters and the determining factors in the actions and structure of his dramas.

“PENTHESILEA”

Issuing from their remote and mythical home in Themiscyra, armed forces of youthful Amazonian maids, led by their young queen, Penthesilea, appear upon the plains of Troy, at the time of the Trojan War, in order to capture mates for themselves. Achilles and Penthesilea meet and are at once seized by an uncontrollable passion for each other, which attains to the extremes of tenderness and humility and of pride and ferocity. Achilles finally defeats Penthesilea, and while she lies unconscious takes her prisoner. Warned by Prothoë, her companion, he tries to save her pride by pretending that he is the one vanquished and captured. After a love scene of great beauty and variety, Penthesilea is rudely undeceived by a sudden turn of the battle. She succumbs to madness, and in a new encounter proposed by Achilles, who comes unarmed, intending

to yield after a mock duel, she murders her lover and mutilates his body in a bestial manner. On recovering her senses and realizing her deed, she kills herself by the mere act of willing to die.

THE MOTIVES

The action of the tragedy is ruled by one exclusive passion, which actuates equally both heroes but reveals its greatest richness and intensity in Penthesilea. The principal motives and steps in the progress of this passion are the following:

The Greeks, puzzled by the indiscriminate direction of the Amazons' attack, send an embassy to the latter, with Achilles as leader and Ulysses as spokesman. Penthesilea, at sight of Achilles, with a "convulsive" movement, casts a sinister glance at him. She is completely absorbed, so that she does not hear Ulysses' address. Suddenly, turning to Prothoë, her attendant, she exclaims:

"Otrere,
My mother, never met a man like him."

Achilles gently suggests that she owes Ulysses an answer. Her eye, "intoxicated," rests on "Achilles' radiant form." She blushes, "with rage or with modesty." Then "confused, wild, and proud," suddenly freeing herself from her trancelike state, she replies that she will send her answer from the quivers of her warriors.

After the resumption of the three-cornered battle between Amazons, Trojans, and Greeks, just as Penthesilea and Achilles have encountered each other, Deiphobus, the Trojan, aims a dangerous blow at Achilles, who has eyes only for Penthesilea. The latter, pale, for a moment motionless with horror, strikes Deiphobus down. Then Achilles and Penthesilea join battle with the utmost fierceness. Achilles, caught at a disadvantage, extricates himself by a clever maneuver which upsets Penthesilea's mount, and returns to his anxious comrades. His conduct is like hers. He is absorbed, speaking in brief sentences, more to himself than to his questioners. In a lengthy speech, which is like a monologue in their midst, he declares:

"What she, the god-like one, desires, I know:
Enough of wingèd woosers did she send,
Whose deadly whispers bore to me her wish."

They are both from the beginning ruled by a contradictory passion, in which tenderness is combined with murderous ferocity. Achilles understands his state of mind. Penthesilea is unconscious of hers.

The Amazons have accomplished the end of their expedition. Having captured enough young men they wish to celebrate the Festival of the Roses, the marriage ceremony, and return home with their mates. But Penthesilea, forgetting that she herself, before meeting Achilles, had given the orders for the festival, now in a sudden fury forbids them to speak of return while Achilles is free. She interprets the wish of the others for the festival as selfishness and lewdness, rebuking Prothoë thus:

"Accursed the heart, immoderate and prone."

Asteria, one of the leaders of the Amazons, who, owing to her late arrival, has had no part in the fighting, prompted by military ambition, belittles the success of the victory and supports Penthesilea. By her selfishness and obvious insincerity she serves to emphasize the paradoxical ingenuousness of Penthesilea, who, obsessed with her passion for Achilles, sincerely misunderstands herself. In a paroxysm of fury Penthesilea heaps renewed reproaches on Prothoë.

She orders her army for a new attack, demanding resumption of the war in a speech compassing the extremes of combative fierceness and the melting ardor of love. She threatens with death anyone who should harm Achilles.

The passion of Penthesilea and Achilles has risen to its first climax. In the sixth scene the tension is relaxed in a lovely, brief intermission. The Amazon maids, blessed by the High Priestess and the Priestesses of Diana, their tutelar goddess, crown their captives with wreaths of roses. A feeling of relief, playfulness and love-making, and happy anticipation holds sway. But this gentle idyl, like a sunlit, flowery valley under the approaching gloom of a thundercloud, lies under the tragic threat of Penthesilea's plan, known only to the audience.

The next phase begins gradually. Penthesilea's contradictory behavior awakens in the assembled Amazons the suspicion, voiced in the seventh scene by one of their captains, that her heart is pierced

"By the most poisonous of Cupid's darts."

Her passion, the sole motive of her conduct, of which she is still unconscious, now, by revealing itself to her people, becomes the concrete motive of a minor counteraction, which, while leading to no material consequences, serves to set her main motive into a clearer light. According to the law of the Amazons the warring maids must not follow individual passion in choosing their future mates, but must each accept the captive whom the chance of the general battle offers to her. Penthesilea thus sets herself in opposition to the objective order of her state, sanctioned by the divine and public law. Though unconscious of her true motive, she is at fault because her unconsciousness is the result, not of her ignorance or the obscurity of her conflict, but of her obsession and blind self-absorption. She is unconscious of the nature of her action, not because she is not aware of her desire, but because she pays no heed, because by her nature she is incapable of paying heed, to the objective, ethical bearings of her desire.

The storm breaks with a sharp, dramatic clash. The battle goes against the Amazons. Achilles strikes down Penthesilea, who is saved by her attendants from immediate capture. The victor, on seeing her fall, casts away sword, shield, and armor, and unarmed follows her through the fleeing Amazons. He is preserved from harm at their hands by Penthesilea's recent injunction.

Penthesilea, among her attendants, now reveals another, greatly intensified instance of the extreme polarity of passion, which is one of the principal forms in which her motives develop. Abruptly rousing herself from her prostration, she cries:

"Loose hounds against him! Elephants, at him!
Whip him with fire brands! Chariots, dash at him,
Mow the luxuriant glory of his limbs
With whirling sickles!"

Immediately after, her mood flies to the extreme opposite of self-pity and tenderness, the latter of which embraces Achilles as well as Prothoë, whom, a little before, she has repulsed and abused with immoderate violence. She complains:

"This bosom he could shatter, Prothoë;
As who would crush with cruel heel a lyre
That to the night-breeze loving whispers made
O' his name."

Upon this follows the richest and most varied series of violent fluctuations found in Kleist's works. The changes of mood succeeding each other in abrupt and rapid sequence are consistent with her nature and full of dramatic interest and force. The ninth scene is unequaled by any similar scene in the Romantic drama, rich as that is in linking motives by means of spontaneous fluctuations of mood. She avows her love for Achilles. But no external consideration, no ethical motive influences her; no faintest sense of objective relationship to her environment stirs in her. The passion shaking her whole being brings no moral conflict to the surface, but works itself out in a purely temperamental tempest. She pleads:

"Nought I desire, Ye Immortal Gods! Nought else
Save him: to draw him down onto this breast."

Again rebounding into savage fury, she accuses, in extreme terms of loathing, the other Amazons of lewd ardor because they are still making ready for the festival. She curses the spring with its roses. Suddenly, with another abrupt rebound, she calls upon the goddess of love. Next she succumbs to a moment of extreme languor:

"Ah me! My soul is stricken unto death!"

Passing quickly beyond this mood, she arrives at utter abjectness. She determines to await Achilles without making an effort to save herself:

"Let him come,
To set his steel-clad foot—it suits me well—
Upon this neck. These cheeks, though like twin-flowers
In rosy bloom, why should they now be parted
From the vile mud whence barely they were plucked!"

Let him drag me with horses (like Hector!), she continues, or throw me to his dogs. She ends with this significant line, which reveals pride of passion as an additional motive:

"Dust rather than a woman without charm."

She now gives way to a state of feeble despair, submitting to the ministrations of faithful Prothoë. At this point the High Priestess expresses the objective judgment upon her. Penthesilea's self-recovery, according to her, is

"Impossible
For her, by nought *outside her* swayed, *no fate*,
Nought but her foolish heart."

Prothoë in reply defines the fundamental principle of Romantic motivation:

"Fate that to her!

Steel bands, to thee, may seem beyond our strength,
Yet she might break them, she, so powerless
Before *the feeling* which thou deemest weak.
What rules within her, who can know but she?
'T is the inward heart, fore'er a keyless riddle."

Once more Penthesilea arouses herself to a flight of passion which rises above any previous climax. In a half-visionary state of exaltation she struggles for a renewed and a greater resolution. In language of surpassing splendor she identifies her desire with an aspiration to a supreme goal of godlike bliss shining beyond the immensity and the glory of the heavens. She is almost delirious. Achilles appears to her as Helios, the god of the sun, whom she

Draws down to her by his golden-flaming hair.

With a sudden, final emotional rebound she falls unconscious.

Achilles appears. The Amazons flee. Prothoë alone remains with the prostrate form of her friend. Achilles, after disposing in a most cavalierly fashion of the solicitude of his comrades, and especially of Ulysses¹ and Diomede, whom he treats as if they were officious porters, turns his attention to Penthesilea and Prothoë. The latter, fearing for Penthesilea's pride, proposes a ruse. When Penthesilea regains consciousness Achilles is to pretend that she has been victorious and he is her prisoner. There follows, in the fourteenth and fifteenth scenes, a prolonged, exquisite love idyl between the two principal characters, which is marked by a great variety and richness of fluctuations of happy moods. With the same abandon with which she surrendered before to the fierceness and desperation of her passion, Penthesilea, deceived by the story of the two loving conspirators, now gives herself to the full happiness, tenderness, generosity, and resourcefulness of jubilant love. But this radiant surrender, which she believes the voluntary gift of the

¹ It is characteristic of the Romantic attitude toward objective reality that Ulysses, the traditional prototype of clear reasoning, the favorite of Homer and of Sophocles, in whose *Ajax* he is the chosen spokesman of Pallas Athene, the goddess of wisdom, and in whose *Philoctetes* he represents the large righteousness of the statesman, is in Kleist's drama conceived, in contrast to Achilles, as a stupid and odious chatterer.

victor, is shot through with constant hints of a tragic threat. Again and again we perceive momentary flashes of the consuming flames of her passion and pride, which are beyond the control of any objective force.

The fortune of the battle is again reversed. Before her lover can prepare Penthesilea for the revelation, fleeing Greeks, pursued by Amazons, come streaming over the scene. Achilles, in an access of battle rage, dons his armor. Penthesilea, suddenly and brutally awakened from her dream of bliss, now enters upon the final stage of her passion.

In the ninth, and in the fourteenth and fifteenth scenes Penthesilea has attained to the farthest limits of the aspiration and tenderness, of the desire for the complete possession and surrender, to the highest degree of the positive energy, of love. A continuation in this direction could only lead to an anticlimactic abatement of the intensity of her passion. But her nature, by sheer temperamental force of its impulse, subject to no objective restraint or modification, converts every new obstacle into an incentive to a greater exertion of emotion. To her only one way lies open to the third and final climax.

Abruptly her love turns into destructive madness. Achilles, in order to win her by saving her pride, challenges her to single combat. He intends to surrender after a sham duel. Without armor, carrying a spear only for appearance's sake, he advances. She murders him and horribly mutilates his body.

In the last scene she gradually recovers her reason. Her passion is now dead and with it all vital impulse. After realizing what she has done she kills herself by the mere act of willing to die. Her last words, though cast in an overelaborate metaphor, are illuminating as an interpretation of Kleist's conception of the inner will in its relations to external physical reality:

"Now I descend into my bosom's depth
As down a shaft, to mine there, cold as ore,
Of Death *a feeling*. In the flames of grief
This ore I harden into steel; now drench it
In bitter-biting poison of repentance.
Then on the anvil of eternal hope

I point and sharpen it into a sword;
 And to this sword I give my willing breast:
 Thus, thus!—And yet once more, thus! . . .
 Now 'tis well."

(She dies.)

This concluding climax of the tragedy is universally condemned.¹ But the condemnation is currently based on the false ground of inconsistency and inadequacy of internal motivation. The scene is intolerable through the ghastly horror, the bestiality, the obscene sadism, of its result, but not through any lack of unity or harmony in its motives. On the contrary, it presents the most complete and consistent working out, in its extreme form, of the fundamental Romantic article of faith, which asserts the exclusive rule, the fateful necessity, and spontaneous primacy of the inner, non-objective, non-moral, solely temperamental impulse. The fatal flaw in the conclusion of the tragedy, the destruction, by the very motives of its seeking, of the prize sought, is not to be traced, as is supposed by the critics of Kleist, to lack of technical skill or to the inadequate vision of the individual poet, but to the general foundations of the Romantic view of character. Given any two lovers endowed with extreme intensity of passion and limited to the motives of that sole passion, the same consequences are inevitable.

Single-mindedness in the Romantic sense is thus the badge not of virtue but of uncontrolled self-seeking. The sum of Romantic conduct is: He that seeketh self loseth it.

Exclusive subjectivity of impulse is non-morality of motive. And non-morality of motive is immorality of action.

STRUCTURE

Penthesilea exhibits a simplicity of structure unequaled in the history of the drama. In one act of twenty-four scenes, in one continuous sweep, solely determined by the inner development of the single passion which is its motive, it completes the full course of the traditional five acts of tragedy.

This simplicity repeats both the virtues and the defects of the inner action. It is the fitting external garment of a purely tempera-

¹ See Otto Brahm, *Heinrich von Kleist*. Berlin: F. Fontane & Co., 1892.

mental motion in its three forms of continuous intensification, rhythmic fluctuations, and spontaneous rebounds of mood.

The action proceeds in three principal propulsions, successively intensified and joined together by scenes which represent the conditions of rebound and relaxation from the succeeding, and of recovery for the ensuing, emotional effort. The last of these scenes combines the functions of the traditional descending action, catastrophe, and catharsis. The movement of the whole is that of a single billow rising in three ascending waves and breaking in one colossal crash.

Owing to the exclusively temperamental basis of its action the tragedy fails to produce the classical catharsis, the tragic elevation of the mind, which wins from the contemplation of great aspiration, crime, and ruin wider and deeper visions of the moral immensity of life. A fate wholly bounded by temperament is devoid of the truth, the grandeur, and the superhuman sovereignty which alone can sustain the tragic awe.

AN ORIGINAL FORM OF THE STRUCTURE OF REVEALMENT

The identification of passion with fate in *Penthesilea* tends to cross the structure proper to a play of action with that of a play of revealment. The latter structure is concerned not with the marshaling of the forces of coming actions but with the dramatic communication of actions already past. In a sense one might define the action of a drama of revealment as setting in after the climactic consummation of a preceding dramatic action.

The recognition of Penthesilea's passion, first by the audience, then gradually by more and more of her people, and finally by herself, is a minor and conventional instance of this structure, which aims chiefly at intensification of the pathos.

In two parts of the initial action, however, Kleist has succeeded, by an original combination of the structure of revealment with that of progressing action, in inventing a very effective device, by which he introduces the beginning of the main action as itself the climax of a continuous preliminary action. In the first scene we learn, through the account of Ulysses to the Greek generals, expository events of recent date. Through the entrance of a captain the narrative is intensified by being brought up to the immediate past. In the following

scene those present see the continuation of the actions reported proceeding before their eyes, and convey them by their accompanying comments to the audience until the very moment, in the fourth scene, when Achilles, the hero of the events observed, bursts upon the stage. An almost exact parallel of this occurs a little later, with Penthesilea as the center of interest. In the seventh scene we are told of Penthesilea's command to resume the battle. Presently the assembled Amazons see the progress of the battle, which continues to the moment when, at the beginning of the ninth scene, Penthesilea, defeated, is led upon the stage.

The extreme unification of the structure with the content of this drama in one seething tide of emotion, intensifying, fluctuating, turning in explosive clashes upon itself, but always rising until the swift cataclysmic conclusion, relates this form structurally very closely to the symphonic poem, the somewhat later Romantic simplification and intensification of the symphony.

STYLE

The style of this drama, which in intensity, Homeric magnificence, heroic splendor, range of image and phrase, sweep of rhythm, excels every other German drama, bears throughout, in its symbolic identification of the inner impulses with the ultimate forces of the universe, the impress of the Romantic totalism. It is the supreme stylistic flight of Romanticism, combining the extremes of its self-absorbed disregard of reality with the extremes of the consuming fervor of its aspiration toward absolute self-realization into a flaming unity of utterance.

ROMANTIC LOVE

In *Penthesilea*, Kleist has fixed the extreme ideal of Romantic love in modern literature. This love, conceived as the primary passion, absorbs in a single impulse every idea, every vital motive, every sense of reality and of value, every power of being, so completely that it is identical with life itself. It is the essence of being. With the end of this passion life itself must cease. The manner of Penthesilea's death is the consummation and symbol of the Romantic ideal of love.¹

¹ An arbitrary but common critical disposition toward allegorical interpretation has selected this tragedy, crowded though it be with the concrete and rich details of indi-

In two works of later poets does this ideal again appear in extreme forms: in Grillparzer's *Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen* and in Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, and in both the action is crowned by the characteristic Romantic death. For while the latter, in Isolde's *Liebestod*, is keyed to triumph rather than to despair, and while Hero's death results not from the positive will to die but, on the contrary, from the complete cessation of the will to live, the bond of unity between the three dramas is the absorption of all the motives of life in the single motive of the passion of love.

Fouqué's *Undine*, through the exquisite symbol of the acquisition of a soul through love, and through the manner of the heroine's death, exhibits in the form of a fairy story the same unity of motive. The characters in the vast body of Romantic literature, though they stop short of the extreme consistency of these four works, yet are

vidual lives, and especially with the specific motives of the passion of a man and a woman for each other, for its favorite victim. Even Adolph Wilbrandt and Otto Brahm, in their biographies of Kleist, have succumbed to the contagion.

Kleist has left in his letters a record of the enthusiasm with which he began *Robert Guiscard*, his first important drama, and the anguish and despair in which he finally gave up the task. Upon this biographical basis the allegorists have constructed an elaborate legend. *Penthesilea*, which was written more than four years after the supposed destruction of the draft of *Guiscard*, is assumed to represent Kleist himself, and *Achilles*, Kleist's first drama. Every impulse of passion in the woman; every cry of the joy and anguish of love; every mood of playfulness, languor, abandon of love, fury of passion; every sting of hatred and pride; even her final murderous madness, are tortured into allegorical expressions of the poet's labors. Penthesilea and Achilles, whose chief distinction and poetic importance lie in their rich and vital individualization, are flattened into mere abstract personifications, the woman, of a man agonizing over a projected drama, the man, of that project. The extraordinary figurative wealth and concrete force and passion of the language, the most fiery and gorgeous speech given to love in German literature, are starved into the monotone of an abstraction. Such are the ways of the allegorizing obsession.

The mischief of this form of interpretation comes from the falsification of thought and the corruption of values involved in it. Its blindness is as ruinous as that of *Penthesilea*. It ignores all that makes the specific content, meaning, and value of the tragedy and emphasizes commonplace relations, which hold equally of the work of any writer, of whatever degree of value or worthlessness. There is no worse enemy to true literary interpretation, no worse disturber of the true literary perspective, than the allegorizing pre-occupation in the panoply of its biographical knowingsness and arbitrary over-generalization.

Even in the rare cases of proved, instead, as in the case of *Penthesilea*, of assumed, discoveries of the actual origins of figures of speech, characters, or incidents, the knowledge acquired bears only indirectly, through a gain of insight into the general habits of mind of an author at a certain period of his life, but never directly, upon the significance of these details in a work of literature, because that significance is determined by the specific exigencies of the creative conception embodied in that work and from it primarily to be inferred.

Finally it should be borne in mind that *Penthesilea* represents in its conception, characters, emotions, structure, and language a far greater creative effort than *Robert Guiscard*.

distinguished by the predominance of the single motive of love, sufficiently manifest to reveal the type.

ROMANTIC REALISM

It is customary to seek the characteristic difference of Realism from Romanticism in the attention given by the former to external detail. But examination of any of the noted works of Romanticism¹ discovers that the latter, so far from falling short of Realism in this respect, often reveals a far greater sensitiveness to the external indications of personality. The true difference lies in the conception of character. Romantic natures are conceived as formed by single or predominantly single inner motives, while Realistic characters are combinations of different, harmonious and mutually antagonistic, motives, internal and objective. The resulting difference in the method of portrayal is not one of greater or less attention to external detail but a divergence and specialization of reference in the symbolic interpretation of that detail. The Romantic interpretation is one-sided and preoccupied, the Realistic more varied, circumspect, balanced, and spontaneous. Here, too, it is true that he that seeketh life, loseth it. The Romantic desire for absolute inner integrity contracts, and by contracting corrupts, the integrity of its vision.

THE THREE FORMS OF THE ROMANTIC ASSOCIATION OF MOTIVES

The exclusive dominance of subjective impulse limits the rise of the motives of conduct in the Romantic mind to three main forms: continuous intensification, abrupt rebound into the opposite state, and rhythmic fluctuations, or variations, of mood. The dependence of these processes on the mechanism of pure temperament, that is, the paradoxical ultimate sensualism of Romanticism, becomes thus manifest.

Continued intensification of an emotion, unless checked by objective modification and inhibition, or by inherent rhythmical variations, leads to obsessions and to nervous breakdown. But it also tends, in natures of great temperamental force and insufficient

¹ For instance, Fouqué's *Undine*, Eichendorff's *Taugenichts*, Chamisso's *Peter Schlemihl*, Grillparzer's *Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen*, Kleist's "Käthchen von Heilbronn," E. T. A. Hoffmann's novels.

sense of objective reality, to bring about a gradual or, in violent natures, an abrupt reversal of an originally good impulse into its extreme opposite, producing ruin and crime. It becomes a monomania. Kleist, who himself was subject to these reversals, was fully aware of their part in the temperamental motions of impulse. He has left an essay, partly whimsical but mainly serious, entitled: *Latest Method of Education*, in which he proposes to replace the pedagogic principle of imitation and continuity by that of opposition (*Widerspruch*) as the ruling form of association. The essay reveals his characteristic, though unconscious, Romantic one-sidedness in his preoccupation with the purely temperamental rather than with the moral or intellectual processes of association. He applies this "law of opposition," not only to "opinions and desires, but much more generally also to feelings, sympathies ('Affekte'), qualities, and traits of character."

The greatest variety and interest, among these three forms, attaches to the fluctuations and changes of mood proceeding from the predominance of temperament in the sequence of motives. It is in the subtle and rich, however one-sided, marshaling of these fluctuations that Romanticism has made perhaps its most important contribution to motivation in modern literature.¹

These fluctuations, of which the ninth scene of *Penthesilea* is the best example, can proceed in two modes. Each variation may take place, as in that scene, in response or in reaction to some event or to some act or speech of another dramatic character; or it may, in monologue or pantomime, follow an exclusively inward temperamental rhythm. The former is more marked, the latter, which in its purity is most characteristic of the associative processes of musical composition, more subtle as well as more spontaneous.

Both these forms of the changes of mood are part of normal life and form a very important factor in the movement of good drama. They are the inner life of the drama. The plays of Shakespeare abound with them. Without them a play, no matter how carefully considered and well worded, is monotonous and lifeless. Milton's *Samson Agonistes* and Tennyson's *Thomas à Becket* owe their dramatic

¹ Next to Kleist, Grillparzer shows the greatest skill in this respect. See my introduction to Grillparzer's *Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen* (Henry Holt & Co.; 2d ed., 1914), pp. lxiv-lxxix.

woodenness largely to the absence of temperamental spontaneity. In social intercourse persons of considerable temperamental flexibility and energy are sharply distinguished from those who are flat and lifeless.

The Romantic, however, is distinguished from the normal mind by the exclusiveness of temperament in the control of these fluctuations. While in the normal character external reality joins with the inner impulse, each modifying, diverting, and at times inhibiting the other and thus producing an endless complexity of motives, in the Romantic mind objective events are at most merely the outward occasions for the release or the intensification of the self-motived inner current of volition.

THE RULE OF THE EXCLUSIVE IMPULSE IN THE OTHER WORKS OF KLEIST

The rule of one exclusive impulse over conduct, exhibited in *Penthesilea*, is carried to an equal degree of intensity in *Die Familie Schriffenstein*, and in Kleist's most important novel, *Michael Kohlhaas*. In the former the single evil passion of suspicion, unmitigated and unqualified by any other motive, constantly rising in intensity and spreading from character to character, determines the action of the tragedy. It is, as the passion of love in *Penthesilea*, the subjective fate, which converts by its maniacal touch every happening, however harmless, trivial, or indifferent, every motive, however ingenuous, into evil. One of the characters describes the motive of the play as a *Sucht*, which means "disease," "plague," and "mania," thus designating it as a force lying beyond the reach of the moral will.

"Suspicion is the black plague of the soul,
To whose diseased eye all actions wear,
Though heavenly pure, the contenance of hell."

Michael Kohlhaas is, as *Penthesilea*, the portrayal of a character, in whom a single, normally good impulse, intensified to the extreme limits of passion, turns into its opposite. A righteous man, in trying to gain redress for a flagrant and deliberate wrong, becomes, through his single passion for justice, a monomaniac and ends on the wheel as an outlaw.

In *Das Käthchen von Heilbronn*, the counterpart of *Penthesilea*, the passion of love acts through the motive of undeviating, slavish fidelity. Käthchen, a Romantic version of the Nutbrown Maid, wins her lover and every worldly triumph through doglike humility.

Hermann, the hero of *Die Hermannsschlacht*, is prompted by a patriotism so absolute that he is proof against the motives of honor, chivalry, policy, humanity, and every other mitigating or balancing motive.¹

"GEFÜHLSVERWIRRUNG"

To Kleist the sway of the single motive appeared, not as a limitation, but as the highest degree of consistency and truth. Every other motive, whether modifying or contradictory, balancing or disturbing, every secondary consideration, every qualification, is in all his greater works rigidly and anxiously excluded. Every force affecting the chief impulse is to him a corruption of the integrity and clarity of character. He abhors such interference above any other fault. His name for it is "Gefühsverwirrung," "confusion of feeling." The warning cry, "Do not confuse my feeling," which issues in varying forms from the lips of his heroes is his most characteristic motto. Kleist's characters, like the monads of Leibnitz—there is a profound relationship between the rationalism of Leibnitz and the Romantic emotionalism, to be pointed out more definitely in a later essay of this series—have no windows.

"PRINZ FRIEDRICH VON HOMBURG"

Prince Friedrich Arthur von Homburg, general of cavalry in the army of the Great Elector of Brandenburg, a young man of an intense and self-absorbed disposition, a somnambulist, is ruled by two passions, love for the Princess Natalie of Orange, the Elector's niece and honorary colonel of a regiment of dragoons, and ambition for military glory. He is entirely unconscious of his love. On the morning of the battle of Fehrbellin, the decisive action in the war

¹ This rule of one exclusive impulse has persisted considerably beyond the Romantic period. In Otto Ludwig's *Erböster* an obstinate sense of right brings about a tragic ending, in a manner resembling that of *Michael Kohlhaas*, but less interesting. Golo, in Hebbel's *Golo und Genoveva*, the two heroes in his *Herodes und Mariamne*, and many other characters in Hebbel's work are the victims of this peculiar one-sidedness.

between Brandenburg and Sweden, the army commanders are assembled to receive their final instructions. The aim of the Elector is not an ordinary victory but complete annihilation of the enemy. To Homburg falls the decisive maneuver. He is to hold the division of cavalry, of which he is the chief, until the wings of the enemy are pushed back to certain positions. Then, but under no circumstances before, is he to "sound the fanfare" for the attack. His instructions are couched in the most peremptory military terms. Homburg, who is in a state of extreme, trancelike self-absorption, induced by a dim recollection of a somnambulistic dream of love which had taken place the previous night, hears of all the instructions nothing except that he is to "sound the fanfare."

The battle takes its course in accordance with the plans of the general staff. Homburg, now quite himself, is informed by his comrades of his precise duties. But yielding to his heedless and headstrong ambition, he orders a premature attack. His protesting subordinates are forced to submit. A victory is won, but the decision planned by the staff is lost.

Homburg, on returning, meets Natalie, and becoming aware of his love for her, wins her.

The Elector, on hearing a first fragmentary report of the inadequate success caused by the premature attack of one part of his army, has ordered a court-martial for the trial of the guilty commander, "whoever he may be."

Homburg is found guilty and, in accordance with military law, condemned to death. On receiving the announcement he takes it at first lightly, as a mere formality promptly to be set aside by the Elector. But as the latter seems determined to let the law take its course, Homburg gradually sinks to the lowest depths of despair. Fancying that the Elector is angry with him for seeking the hand of his sovereign's niece, he releases the latter and, in a scene in which absurd vanity and abject horror of death blend, begs her to intercede for him with the Elector. She tells her uncle of Homburg's despair. The Elector, astonished, decides to let the decision rest with Homburg's own sense of justice. The offender now recovers his dignity. After a long struggle he decides that he cannot regard the verdict as unjust and himself insists on his execution.

The situation seems hopeless. The solution is found in the following way. Homburg's comrades, whose spokesman is their senior, the stern old Colonel von Kottwitz, insist that spontaneous feeling, which looks to the intentions that rule our acts rather than to the letter of the law, must decide. The Elector, in a scene in which Homburg shows his old spirit and valor, finally sets the verdict aside.

The drama concludes with the betrothal of the lovers and the glorification of Homburg as the victor of Fehrbellin and a hero who has won immortal fame.

THE MOTIVES OF THE ACTION

As in *Penthesilea* and *Michael Kohlhaas*, Kleist opposes in this, his last and most popular drama, the motives of self-absorbed passion to those of the objective order. The crucial parts of the action are the process of the Prince's self-recovery and the reasons for his final glorification.

It is generally assumed that the action embodies, in the voluntary submission of the Prince to the general law, the triumph of the objective order, represented by the Elector, and hence that there is solid ground for the inference that Kleist finally had outgrown the limitations of Romanticism.

The current account¹ of the decisive motives may be summed up as follows: The Elector, in submitting the decision of the validity of the official sentence to the Prince himself, knows the latter's true nature, temporarily unbalanced by the horror of a felon's death, so well that he is certain that Homburg, as soon as he is face to face with the stark necessity of choosing, will recover his honor and self-respect. After thus redeeming himself, the guilty man is worthy of rehabilitation.

In the words of Professor Nollen,² which fairly sum up the general opinion, Homburg's "heedless individualism and haughty defiance of the early scenes are gone. . . . In a day, he has grown from the

¹ See J. S. Nollen's edition of *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg* (Ginn & Co., 1899), Introduction, pp. lvii-ix; pp. 151 ff., 161 ff., 165 ff., and the authorities quoted by him, pp. lxxi ff. G. M. Merrick's edition (Oxford University Press, 1914), Introduction. Hermann Gilow, *Die Grundgedanken in Heinrich von Kleist's "Friedrich von Homburg,"* Progr. Berlin, 1890.

² *Op. cit.*, p. Iviii.

rash youth to stanch manhood, and now the elector can and must preserve him to the state."

In this view the Elector, whose dramatic function is "psychological" and pedagogic, is necessarily characterized by infallibility of judgment, lightened by a touch of humor, forcibly read into ll. 1205/6 and ll. 1180-85, in spite of his perplexity manifested just before in ll. 1174/5.

This interpretation overlooks the serious structural implication that by putting the central dramatic conflict primarily into the keeping of the Elector it makes him instead of the Prince the hero of the second half of the play, and so destroys the unity of the action.

Moreover, the current theory contradicts itself. It unconsciously bases its argument on the reversal of its thesis; for it makes the Elector debase the objective order, the sovereignty of which he is supposed to vindicate, to the subordinate function of the apparatus for a subjective experiment. In substance the Elector establishes the culprit as the court of the highest instance upon the law of the realm. The confusion of the current argument stands forth in all its nakedness if we suppose that the Elector, in human fallibility, had erred in his estimate of the Prince's strength of character.

Finally, even in rising to the highest demands of personal honor, the Prince cannot undo the objective injury caused by his self-absorbed breach of law. The serious strategic miscarriage, for which he alone is responsible, remains, necessitating resumption of the war with all its risks to his country. He can at best be a proper object of clemency. But no stretch of generosity or sympathy can accord to him the shadow of a title to the glory, the tokens of supreme excellence, heaped upon him at the last.

Thus the current theory offers no escape from the conclusion that Kleist's mind was so completely cast in the mold of Romanticism that he could not even conceive of the objective order, except as an adjunct, a mere province, deriving its authority from the central throne of subjective impulse. On any save the Romantic interpretation of the leading motives, the final action of the drama is a piece of theatrical claptrap.

A more specific scrutiny of the motives from which the two crucial phases of the action arise, is necessary.

Natalie, after witnessing the Prince's abject terror, goes to see the Elector to plead for the life of her lover. To the Elector's perplexed question whether the latter regards the verdict as unjust she replies that the Prince has lost all self-respect, that he thinks of nothing but safety and asks nothing but mercy. The wretched man has lost all power of ethical judgment.

The Elector, deeply troubled, replies that he would not be justified in opposing himself to the "opinion" of such a warrior, that he has in his "innermost being" (*im Innersten*) the highest regard for Homburg's "feeling" and therefore must leave the decision to the latter. This is typically Romantic reasoning. In treating as a conflicting ethical judgment the Prince's plea for mercy, the abjectly personal character of which Natalie has been at pains to emphasize he himself exhibits a confusion of objective and subjective motives and values of action.

The Prince, on receiving the Elector's written message, finds it, according to Natalie's interpretation, l. 1387, in his "heart" that he cannot regard the verdict as unjust.

This resolution of the Prince is no objective act, but a self-recovery involving no more than the reawakening of the subjective motives of an honorable self-respect, which, however, promptly lead to a characteristic excess of pride. This pride dictates the terms of the passage, ll. 1748-52, which marks the final turn of the action. In these words:

"Silence! It is my inexorable will!
I am resolved to glorify the law . . .
By a free-chosen death."¹

The Prince, cutting short all objective discussion, proposes by an exclusively self-willed act to give sanction to the law. And this arbitrary and subjective enactment of the law is the crucial factor in the Elector's decision.

We are confronted, therefore, not with the education of the Prince in objective reality, but with the conversion of the Elector to Romanticism. Nor does the contagion of the Romantic system of motives stop with him. Not a character is immune. Even the

¹ "Ruhig! Es ist mein unbeugsamer Wille!
Ich will das heilige Gesetz . . .
Durch einen freien Tod verherrlichen."

old Colonel von Kottwitz, the senior and spokesman of the army, intended as the typical, straightforward, and sober embodiment of the objective order, plunges in his climactic speech, ll. 1569–1607, into rampant Romanticism. According to his plea the highest law is not the “letter” of the ruler’s will, i.e., the written law, but “himself,” in whose “breast” the law must take effect. Not the “regulations” is the ruler to follow; he is not to make a “dead tool” of the army; he is not to put his trust in the law book; but he is to follow his “feeling” (*Empfindung*, l. 1586) and his “heart” (l. 1394). All the terms and valuations of this speech are characteristic of the typical “free,” i.e., exclusively subjective, soul of Romanticism.

It is not necessary to complete the tale of the triumphs of the Romantic motives except by an indication of the most important terms and passages. They are: *Gefühl*, l. 1040, l. 1129; coupled with *Innerstes*, l. 1183; *Herz*, l. 1343, l. 1388, l. 1441. *Wunsch*, l. 1206, l. 1235, l. 1261. *Meinung*, l. 1181, l. 1310. *Stimmung*, l. 1356.

There is one apparent contradiction in the course of the motives. The Elector, ll. 1613–20, in reply to Kottwitz’ plea, rejects what he terms the latter’s “sophistical doctrine of freedom.” But he promptly, l. 1751, accepts the Prince’s doctrine of freedom, which in essence is identical with that of Kottwitz. The difference between the two is merely that of a subjective qualification. According to Kottwitz, downright and incapable of subtleties of formulation, the Elector would be wrong in placing the objective law above the spontaneous feeling, while according to the Elector he is right in setting aside the objective law as soon as the Prince in the sovereign “freedom” of his “inner feeling” has sanctioned or, in the term of l. 1751, “glorified” that law.

The elaborate insistence of the dialogue leading from Kottwitz’ plea to the Elector’s amendment, on the Prince’s absent-mindedness during the instructions on the morning of the battle serves merely to blur the real proceedings. It cannot remove the fact that the Prince was informed by his fellow-officers later on, immediately before the attack, of his precise duties.

The reason for the Elector’s decision lies in the exigencies of the final scene. The situation objectively warrants no triumphant

conclusion. To emerge as the author of a superlative success and as a paragon of virtue, the Prince himself must become the embodiment of a principle of conduct higher than that which he violated. It is therefore he who must speak the decisive word.

This supreme principle must, however, make its appearance in such a guise of subjective subtleness as not to place the Elector brusquely in the wrong with regard to his previous strict adherence to the law. The sovereign is enabled to save his face only through the gradual shifting of the perspective, which is accomplished in the transition from Kottwitz' formulation of the new morality to that accepted by the Elector.

The "inner feeling" thus is the highest law in this as in all the other greater works of Kleist. The faults of this drama, the confused characterization of the Elector and Kottwitz, the blurring dialogue bridging the hiatus between the Elector's rejection of Kottwitz' doctrine of freedom and his acceptance of the same in the Prince's formulation, the false ethical valuations, and the trivial pomp of the conclusion are therefore to be accounted for, not primarily by technical or creative shortcomings peculiar to Kleist, but by the nature of Romanticism, which, in character and mind, Kleist shared with his fellows.

APPENDIX

THE FRAGMENT "ROBERT GUISCARD"

The fragment *Robert Guiscard, Herzog der Normänner*, which was published in 1808, the year of the completion of *Penthesilea*, has been the subject of much speculation. The two chief questions which arise out of the conflict of opinions concern the time of the composition of this work and the reasons for and the extent of the destruction of the manuscript.

THE HISTORY OF THE FRAGMENT

The first definite statement that he has begun composition is contained in Kleist's letter to Ulrike, dated Weimar, December 9, 1802 ". . . . the beginning of my poem, which is to declare to the world my love of you, arouses the admiration of all men, to whom I impart it. O heavens! If I could only complete it."

This can refer only to *Guiscard*; for the only other work on which he was engaged at that time, *Die Familie Schroffenstein*, is called by him "a wretched piece of rubbish" ("eine elende Scharteke").

From Weimar, during this time, he paid several visits to Wieland's home in Ossmannstädt, situated near Weimar. From a letter to Ulrike, dated Leipzig, March 13, 1803, we learn that he had to leave Ossmannstädt abruptly, in order to extricate himself from an embarrassing situation caused by the love of Wieland's youngest daughter for him. *Guiscard* must have progressed during the interval between these two letters. He tells of taking lessons in elocution in order to recite his "tragedy." He is very hopeful about the work. He now knows, and his friends agree, that "a man [der Mensch] must cultivate the talent which he feels to be predominant in him."

According to his letter to Ulrike, dated October 5, 1803, he is greatly troubled with the progress of his "poem." He has been at work upon it "half a thousand continuous days" and is afraid that his task is too great for him. "Hell gave me my half-talents, heaven gives man a whole talent or none at all."

The final step in this period of the history of *Guiscard* is told in his letter to Ulrike, dated St. Omer, near Paris, October 26, 1803. The writer is in despair: "I re-read in Paris all that I had done on the work, rejected it, and burned it; and that is the end. Heaven refuses me fame, the greatest of all the goods of the earth; like a wilful child, I cast everything else after it."

This record is supplemented by a letter by Wieland, dated April 10, 1804. From this we learn that in January, 1803, when he was visiting Wieland, Kleist had written down many scenes of *Guiscard*, but that he always again destroyed his work because he was not satisfied with it. After many requests the poet recited from memory some of the principal scenes and fragments of others. Wieland was deeply impressed. He assured Kleist that if the spirits of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Shakespeare combined to produce a tragedy, *Guiscard*, provided the whole redeemed the promise of the parts recited, would be that masterpiece. This extravagant praise threw Kleist into an extreme of excitement and gratitude.

Wieland tells that he tried to encourage Kleist to complete the work. But the latter, according to the account of his fatherly friend, accomplished no more.

The time given in Kleist's letter of October 5, 1803, quoted above, fixes the beginning of the composition at the beginning of May, 1802. This date coincides almost to a day with the beginning of his stay on the island in the Aar River, of which he wrote *Ulrike* under date of May 1, 1802.

There is no reason against accepting this evidence as conclusive. The first conception of the drama, however, dates farther back. The passage in his letter to *Ulrike*, dated October 10, 1801, concerning "the ideal" which he has worked out for himself in solitude; the "song of his love," which he cannot surrender to such a rude mob as men are, who would call a "bastard" this "Vestals' child" of his—this passage is undoubtedly the first reference to *Guiscard*. Intended as a combination of classical Greek and Shakespearean art, this drama might well be called a "bastard." The term "child of my love" is in harmony with his statement, in the letter of December 9, 1802, that the "poem" shall be a declaration of his love for *Ulrike* before the world. The terms of extreme anticipation are appropriate only to *Guiscard*. There is no hint that he was occupied with any serious creative work until this time.

We are therefore justified in assuming that not until October, 1801, did Kleist definitely decide upon a poetic career; that *Robert Guiscard* was his first serious theme; and that not until May, 1802, did he actually begin carrying out his purpose.

THE REASONS FOR AND THE EXTENT OF THE DESTRUCTION OF THE MANUSCRIPT OF "ROBERT GUISCARD"

Robert Guiscard, as guardian of his nephew Abelard, heir to the Norman kingdom in Italy, has robbed the latter of his throne. In order to conciliate Abelard he has betrothed him to his own daughter Helena, widow of the Greek Emperor Otto, who, having been driven from her empire by a revolution, has sought refuge with her father. Guiscard, in order to restore her to her throne, has led an army against Constantinople. During the siege the pest breaks out among his forces. In meeting a deputation from the army, come to plead for the return to Italy, Guiscard himself succumbs to the disease.

The dramatic action proceeds briefly as follows:

At early morning representatives of the Norman army, accompanied by a crowd of soldiers, assemble before Guiscard's tent,

which is closed. Throughout their speeches and actions stalks the awful specter of the pest. They call for Guiscard. The latter's daughter, Helena, appears and in a dialogue with an old man, the spokesman of the deputation, tries to put them off in a manner which is just sufficiently lacking in coherence to intensify rather than allay anxiety. After her return to the tent the assembled people learn through a Norman, who has just arrived, that during the night Guiscard's body physician, disguised as an army officer, has secretly and hurriedly been summoned to Guiscard's tent. Their disquiet grows. Robert, Guiscard's son and successor, and Abelard appear. Robert arrogantly chides the people, while Abelard, suave and treacherous, full of hatred for Robert, who through Guiscard's crime is to succeed the throne rightfully belonging to Abelard, mingles with the people, spreading ominous hints regarding Guiscard's health. When the anxiety and suspicion of the people threaten to reach the point of disorder, Guiscard appears. It is manifest that he is not well. With an heroic effort he conquers his weakness and in a dialogue with the leading man tries to convince the people of his good health and give them confidence. The struggle between the malady, which is rapidly gaining upon him, and his iron resolve produces one of the greatest scenes in the German drama. His agony almost overcomes him. At one point he falters, pauses, looks about helplessly. When the tension has become intolerable, Helena, with sudden presence of mind, pushes a large army drum toward him, on which he cautiously steadies himself.

It is now evident that he is stricken with the fatal disease. The old spokesman resumes his plea for the return. Guiscard, slowly and with great effort looking around, asks those present to lead his wife, who gives signs of despair, into the tent. After a few more lines spoken by the leader of the people, the action breaks off.

This fragment, together with other parts of the drama, now lost, is generally supposed to have been burned by Kleist, in accordance with his account in the letter of October 26, 1803, quoted above. Though it is known that he was occupied with *Guiscard* in 1807, the year before its publication, the prevailing opinion leans to the more probable guess that most of it was re-written before that time, and that in 1807 Kleist made one more futile attempt to finish it.

Many conjectures have been offered as to the remaining course of the action, and unsuccessful attempts have been made even to complete the drama. The antagonism of Robert and Abelard and the situation of Helena, desiring to recover her throne and perplexed by her conflicting affections for Robert and Abelard, offer the chief motives of any subsequent action.¹

But it has occurred to no one that *Guiscard*, in the dramatic essence of its action, is not a fragment at all. It requires only one concluding scene, containing the death of Guiscard and indicating the tragic ruin sweeping over all those whose fortunes have been in his keeping. Any extended action, with Robert, Helena, and Abelard as the leading characters, would dramatically be, not a continuation of the action centering upon Guiscard, but a new drama. The analogy of unity of action preserved in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* by the succession of two different principal characters does not hold; for, apart from the fact that Caesar does not die until much later in the action, the essential difference between the two dramas is that Shakespeare's tragedy embodies primarily a conflict of two political ideals represented by the two main antagonists, whereas *Guiscard* is a tragedy of one dominating character working out his individual fate in a mighty tempest of typical passions and powers within him, like *Macbeth*. Four acts without Guiscard are dramatically no more conceivable as the continuation of the fragment than would be an analogous continuation of the first act of *Macbeth*.

Guiscard is a very interesting instance of the large group of works, common to all creative arts, the substantial completeness of which is obscured by the fragmentariness of some of its external features, a characteristic, but after all minor, fault caused by the artist's own misinterpretation of his true creative intention in laying down the fundamental lines of his initial structural draft. Such "fragments" cannot be "completed" without losing even the essential completeness achieved in them.

The clue to Kleist's theoretic misconception of his true creative purpose is contained in Wieland's letter. Kleist intended a combination of the drama of Sophocles and Shakespeare. The fragment

¹ Cf. Brahm, *op. cit.*, pp. 112-13.

reveals, indeed, influences of the two masters. The character of Guiscard in its magnificent force, torn hither and thither by conflicting, fundamental passions; the complexity and richness of the counteraction represented by Robert, Abelard, and Helena; the predominance of the will in all the characters; and the presentation of the conflict in the form of direct, progressing activity—these are in the Shakespearean manner. But the structural use of the people, the stalking horror of the plague, the gradual revealment of the fatal fact, culminating in the dialogue between the hero and an old man speaking for the people, are obviously borrowed from Sophocles' *King Oedipus*. And from this structural device, though great be its immediate dramatic efficacy, there arose Kleist's crucial error. He failed to perceive that Sophocles' tragedy is a drama of revealment and not of progressive action. Its entire dramatic action consists in the gradual unfolding of a deed long past. Upon its culmination in the final proof of Oedipus' unconscious past crime, it plunges to a swift and final catastrophe. Kleist's drama, on the other hand, was conceived as a developing course of action. The past crime of Guiscard, long known to all the characters, is not a crucial but merely an expository part of it. The dramatic function of the gradual publication of Guiscard's stricken condition is therefore not as the revealment in Sophocles' drama, that of the ascent, but that of the catastrophic turn of the action. *Guiscard* is not the first, but the last, act of a tragedy.

This result does not, of course, directly answer the question as to the extent of the destruction of the manuscript. But it qualifies its value by shifting the problem to a different level. It offers a basis for a comparative estimate of the values of the part preserved and that supposedly lost.

Whether we assume that Kleist's account refers literally to the entire draft which he had in manuscript, or only to later unsatisfactory attempts at a continuation of the original part much praised by Wieland, we cannot attach a tragic finality to the act of destruction. He knew by heart the sections which satisfied him, at the time of his stay in Wieland's home; and later, by his systematic exercises in recitation, he must have fixed them so deeply in his memory that a literal re-writing of them could have required only

the physical labor of the pen. As to the unsatisfactory additions, we know from Wieland's letter that their destruction was his habitual preliminary to renewed composition. It seems, therefore, reasonable to conclude that the published fragment is identical with the original draft as far as it satisfied Kleist.

In any case, the main argument leaves little doubt that in the fragment we have all that really matters of Kleist's first tragedy.

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EARLIER AND LATER VERSIONS OF THE FRIENDSHIP-THEME. I

"DAMON AND PYTHIAS"

The ideal and touching friendship exemplified by the Pythagorean disciples commonly known as "Damon and Pythias"¹ has found its most effective literary treatment in Schiller's ballad "Die Bürgschaft." The numerous references by ancient writers² to so notable an example of fidelity and constancy have failed to inspire and arouse the creative imagination of the world's greatest poets save that of Schiller.

For many centuries the subject itself seems to have been ignored until, at the beginning of the fourteenth century, its moral and ethical significance came to be recognized by a monkish writer. Religious didactic literature, both prose and verse, was then well developed, and among the forms in which the material came to be presented the allegory was both common and popular. Chief among the moralizing works of this sort was the *Gesta Romanorum*,³ which was most widely known among the clergy and which became a favorite source of sermon literature. The fact that among the various kinds of games both chess and cards⁴ were treated symbolically speaks for the general familiarity with, and the popularity of, this sort of pastime among the better classes.⁵ It is in connection with one of such symbolical works that we find the appearance of the Damon and Pythias account in mediaeval literature.

¹ Critical investigation shows "Pinthias" to be the correct form. It is to no purpose to discuss here how or when the current name "Pythias" came to be accepted. It may be noted, however, that the names of the two friends are not uniformly given by the earliest writers. Valerius Maximus writes "Phintias" on the basis of Greek sources which have Φύριας. Cicero *De off.*, gives "Pynthias," while Hyginus, Schiller's source, has the two names of "Moeros and Selmuntios."

² Iamblich. et Porphyri. *Uit. Pythagor.*; Diiodor. Sic. x. 4; Plutarch *De amic. mult.* 2. Cicero *De off.* ill. 10. 45; Tusc. v. 22; Maximus *Memorab.* iv. 7. ext. 1.

³ H. Oesterley's ed. (Berlin, 1872), under No. 108 gives the Damon and Pythias story. For additional references to other versions see the notes on this story.

⁴ Breitkopf, *Urspr. d. Spielkarten*, p. 9, asserts that the card game was of French origin; its introduction into Germany dates from about 1300. A symbolical treatment of the cards was by Brother John, a monk, entitled *Ludus cartularum moralisatus*, 1377.

⁵ On the origin and popularity of the game of chess, cf. F. Vetter, *Das Schachzabelbuch Kunrats von Ammenhausen*, Frauenfeld, 1892, cap. 2. Symbolical treatment of the subject appeared as early as 1180 in *De naturis rerum* by Alexander of Neckham, and in Joh. Gallensis' *Summa Collectionum*, Paris, about 1260. Among the many later works cf. Benjamin Franklin, *The Morals of Chess*, 1787.

The work in question is that of the Lombard monk, Jacobus de Cessolis (Casalis, Cassolis, Casulius, Cessola, so named from his supposed birthplace in Picardy), master at Rheims. His moral adaptations of chess in which the various chess-figures symbolized the different classes of society, and the movements of the figures served to illustrate all sorts of relations and conditions of men, were first in the form of sermons, but were later put into verse. The effect of this didactic work was increased by the interlarding of tales and illustrative material from ancient or biblical sources. Among the mass of material so used by him was the story of Damon and Pythias. His entire treatise appeared in Latin in the forepart of the fourteenth century.¹

Two notable translations into French were made in 1347 by Jean Ferron, and before 1350 by Jean de Vignay. The last-named work was the basis of Caxton's English version which appeared between 1475 and 1480.²

More of the nature of adaptations to the work of De Cessolis³ were the various elaborations of ecclesiastical writers in Germany during the early fourteenth century. Their aim at popularizing their didactic efforts resulted in writing the "Schachbücher" or "Schachzabelbücher." The earliest of these was the *Schachzabelbuch* (1338) of Kunrat (Konrad) von Ammenhausen,⁴ a parish priest of Stein on the Rhine. While this is a free adaptation of De Cessolis, the work of Heinrich von Beringen⁵ (about 1300) seems to be more closely related to the original work of De Cessolis. Both writers incorporate the story of Damon and Pinthias.

The spread of the work to Northern Germany is seen in the elaboration of the *Pfarrer zu dem Hechte* (1335).⁶ The account of the "Bürgschaft" here contains three rather interesting lines:

¹ *Liber de moribus hominum et officiis nobilium super ludos scacchorum.* There are about 80 manuscripts in Latin; the oldest existing is that of Milan, 1479.

² *The Game of Chess* by William Caxton, reproduced in facsimile by V. Figgins, London, 1860; W. Blades, *The Biography and Topography of William Caxton*, England's first printer, 1877.

³ For bibliography of the various versions cf. Vetter, p. xli, note.

⁴ Cf. Vetter, *Das Schachzabelbuch*, Frauenfeld, 1902; also Kirschner, *DNL*, XII, Introduction. Konrad's work was excerpted and plagiarized by Jakob Mennel of Constance in his *Schachzabel* of 1506. Konrad's source was a manuscript of 1365, now in Heidelberg.

⁵ Cf. *DNL*, XII, ed. by Zimmermann (*Lit. Ver. Stuttg.*, Vol. CLXVI).

⁶ *DNL*, XII, 142, ed. Zjd. A., XVII, 162 f.

der liz he den gesellin
dem Kunge do czu burgin
vor sinuz halsiz wurgin,

which find a parallel rhyme in Schiller's lines:

Ich lasse den Freund dir als Bürgen,
Ihn magst du, entrinn' ich, erwürgen.

In each of these accounts referred to, the tyrant Dionysus, in keeping with Valerius Maximus' recital, which Jacobus de Cessolis seems to have followed, makes request to be adopted into the friendship of these two men ("Eosque insuper rogavit, ut in societatem amicicie ad tertium gradum sodalicii reciperen"). But the introduction of elements of danger as obstacles to a speedy return which gives added interest and suspense to the story is unknown in these as well as in the oldest references except that of Hyginus.

A departure from the story by the preceding is taken up in the work of Meister Stephan of Dorpat (about 1350), who wrote in Low German.¹ Here the one friend bears the name of "Physius," and the punishment to which he is condemned is that of hanging.

In addition to the "Schachbücher," the incorporation of the "Damon and Pinthias" motive is also found in the work *Blumen der Tugent*, written in 1411 by a Tyrolese nobleman, Hans Vintler.² Curiously the names of the two friends are given there as Amon, a youth, and Physoia, a woman. The latter becomes the hostage for her friend, who has been condemned to death by decapitation. Aside from these peculiarities the account fails to mention the adoption of the tyrant into the friendship of the two.

The omission of the last-named element, which is one of the essential parts of the original account, is also a characteristic of the moralizing tale of the fifteenth century entitled *Der Seele Trost*, by Joh. Moritz Schulze.³ The subject material seems to have been divided according to the order of the ten commandments. The

¹ *DNL*, XII, pp. 1 and 5 f. Ed. M. Stephan's *Schachbuch*, Dorpat.

² Zingler (*Zfd. Philol.*, II, 185) believed that it was the oldest German treatment of the subject, a view no longer tenable, since Konrad's work antedates it by seventy-four years. The manuscript is in the British Museum. An old edition published in Lübeck, about 1489, is now in the library at Lübeck.

³ Kürschner, *loc. cit.*, p. 477. Excerpts in *Zfd. Mdarten*, I, 174 f.; II, 1 f.; II, 289 f. Frommann's *D. Mda.*, I, II, 9.

story itself does not refer to any desire on the part of the tyrant to join in their friendship after the exhibition of fidelity and vicariousness on their part; he merely pardons the offender.

Barring Caxton's¹ translation, previously referred to, in which the account of Damon and *Phisias* is briefly told, there seems to be no evidence to show the treatment of this motif in England prior to Elizabethan times. To Richard Edwards belongs the distinction of having utilized the theme for dramatic presentation in his *Damon and Pithias*,² which the prologue declares to be a "tragicall-comedie." A cast of twelve characters presented this play before Queen Elizabeth, we are told, and aimed to show how these friends were

All one in effete, all one in their goyng,
All one in their study, all one in their doyng,

and how

true love had joyned in perfect amytie.

The moralizing intent of the play appears in the epilogue in which the author emphasizes

no friendship is sure, but that which is grounded
on vertue.

The plot of the play shows Damon and Pithias as travelers in the tyrant's city. A sycophant, to whom Damon had addressed a few inquiries, by false accusation causes Damon to be arrested as a spy. The furious tyrant condemns him to die "by the sworde or the wheele the next day" or to have his head "stroken off."

The condemned man requests time to set his worldly things in order. Pithias offers himself as a hostage, whereupon two months are granted, after which time Pithias is to "hang" or "lose his head."

The introduction of a rough scene in which Stephano, the servant of Damon, gives the false accuser of his master a sound drubbing may have been a concession to popular taste. After Damon has

¹ The impression made on the King, and the moral given in Caxton's work: "the Kyng was gretely abaswyd. and for the grete trouthe that was founden in hym/he pardenyd hym and prayed hem bothe that they wold receyue hym as theyr grete frende and felowe. lo here the vertues of loue/that a man ought not to doubt the deth for his frende / lo what it is to doo for a frende. and to lede a lyf debonayr/and to be wyth out cruelte. to loue & not to hate/whyche causeth to doo good ayenst euyl. and to torne payne in to benefete and to quenchre cruelte."

² Published in 1571 and in 1582. Reproduced in R. Dodsley, *Old Plays*, London, 1825, I, 157-262.

returned, each beseeches the other to permit him to offer himself as a sacrifice. The King is much affected and pardons Damon, after which he hears a harangue on friendship. At the conclusion of the play the tyrant is adopted into their friendship.

A dramatic version of the story also appeared in France from the pen of Samuel Chappuzeau¹ (1625-1701), a minor dramatist who, like most of his contemporaries, drew largely from Latin sources. His recognition as a writer does not rest merely on the fact that the Elzevirs published one or two of his comedies—Molière is indebted to him for several plots. His poverty led him to change the titles of his works in order to have them reprinted and thus gain a new source of revenue. Thus we have *Damon et Pythias*² and its reprinted form, *Les Parfaits Amis, ou le Triomphe de l'Amour et de l'Amitié, Tragi-comédie*. The drama was first acted in Paris toward the end of 1656.

Chappuzeau's plot:³ Damon and Pythias, two young Thessalian nobles, each find at Syracuse the lady of their love, and are happy in anticipation of their marriage. A jealous rival attacks Pythias and is killed. Dionysius condemns the murderer, but grants him three months' grace to set his affairs in order, while Damon becomes hostage for him. The action begins with the last day of the three months allotted for Pythias' return. Sophrosyne is less anxious for Pythias' return, while Doride, for love of Damon, reproaches Pythias. Damon is constant and hopeful, and his loyalty to his friend conquers his love. "L'honneur plus que l'amour tous les grans coeurs maitrise" (Act III, sc. 2). Pythias, mindful of his obligation, hastens his return and appears, despite obstacles and chicanery of friends, in the nick of time. The tyrant's heart is softened and he liberates both, saying:

Votre amitié me charme et je pretens moy-même
Dans le commerce aimable entrer comme troisième.

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[To be concluded]

¹ Fournel, *Les Contempor. de Molière*, Paris, 1863, pp. 357 f.; S. Chappuzeau, *Le Théâtre français*, Paris, 1876; Friedr. Meinel, *S. Chappuzeau*, dissertation, Leipzig, 1908.

² The first edition appeared at Amsterdam in 1657, the second in 1672 without place or publisher's name; a third edition appeared in Amsterdam in 1705.

³ Chappuzeau claims Cicero and Valerius Maximus as his sources.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Georg Rudolf Weckherlin, The Embodiment of a Transitional Stage in German Metrics. By AARON SCHAFFER. (Hesperia.) Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1918.

The title of this study is not quite comprehensive enough, since the whole first half of the slender volume is devoted to a summary of the development of German metrics from earliest times down to Weckherlin. Of course such "running starts" are necessary in almost any historical study, especially in one which is dealing, as this one does, with a particular stage in a *development*. One wonders, however, if Mr. Schaffer's work would not have been unified and strengthened if he had condensed very considerably this first half and referred us to Saran and his other sources for particulars.

The "transitional stage" of the title refers to the progression from the *irregularly alternating* technique of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to the *regularly alternating-accentuating* technique of the seventeenth century. It is the going over from the metrical practices of the "short rhyme-pair," as in the earlier native didactic poetry—practices which allowed many accentual "conflicts"—to those of the later foreign-influenced Renaissance poetry, where such "conflicts" were decidedly taboo.

Wherein Weckherlin is the "embodiment" of this transitional stage becomes clear if we peruse the second half of Mr. Schaffer's study. His argument is somewhat as follows: On examining Weckherlin's early verse it is found that he "consistently employed the irregularly alternating technique of the 'kurze Reimpaare.'" This technique appears in such verses as:

Der sternen gēwohnlichen dantz.

Three decades later the poet revised, for a new edition, many of these earlier poems, and in doing so removed a large number of the accentual "conflicts" and thus left the verses in question comparatively smooth. The verse I have cited above, for instance, appears in the revised edition of 1648 as:

Der sternen wunderreichen dantz.

It is thus, in his progress from sixteenth-century practices toward the Opitzian standards in metrical technique, that he is looked upon by the author as an embodiment of the transitional period.

Thus far Mr Schaffer has emphasized a point which has been recognized, though less clearly, by students of Weckherlin's technique and of that of his period. But in one other point the author's work has yielded an even

more distinct contribution. Weckherlin did not, in revising his earlier poems, remove all the apparent accentual conflicts. Schaffer contends, however, that the poet removed the serious ones, and that the remaining conflicts become much less violent, in fact quite justifiable, when correctly read. To the aid of their correct interpretation he summons the rhythmic principles of "hovering" and "secondary" accent. Hovering accent relieves, the author believes with Franz Saran, the apparent conflict in series of "syllables possessing equal, or almost equal, duration and stress." And how? By distributing the stress "evenly over the entire group of words, with the syllables in [metrical] arsis [position] receiving the emphasis [or heft?] and those in thesis the higher pitch; in this way the verse receives a slower movement which makes possible the smoothing out of any apparent accentual conflict." This principle applies to, and is instrumental, the author contends, in the smoothing out of, such verses as the iambic:

Berg, thäl, feld und wald widerhallen.

Further and more important relief in the case of apparent conflict between rhythmical and metrical accent is offered by what the author calls an extension of the principle of "secondary accent" as announced by Professor Bright. That is, Mr Schaffer would extend the principle which would normally give, in such verses as,

Thy terriblē hushed laughter, stranger still,

to the *-ble* a thetic value; so as to cover also those instances even where there is no intervening light syllable between primary and secondary accent. In such verses therefore as,

Hat euch als ihr kunst-stück erdacht,

the syllable *-stück*, which has in prose normally simply a secondary accent, is quite usable in a thesis position. That is, if we are careful to give to *kunst* the higher pitch (as also in the case of hovering accent) and to *-stück* the metrical heft. Thus far and even farther the author carries the application of the principle of secondary accent, and with success. I feel, however, that he extends it too far when he applies it to relieve such *Versungetüme* as,

Abèr disè süssè gothèit,

in which the inflectional endings *-se* are deemed worthy of appearing in a thesis position. It is hard for me to believe that this verse is "by no means harsh sounding." A critic may be warranted in going great lengths in interpreting sympathetically, and in strengthening thereby, the apparently weak spots in the technique of a great poet. Weckherlin would however hardly come into this category.

Nevertheless Mr Schaffer has, I feel, thrown his weight in the right scale. He has sided in the main with Saran and other recent students of

real rhythmic phenomena—students who are sometimes called “metrical anarchists”—and against those who fail to use their ears, and to whom the rigid *metric scheme* of verse is the tyrannical alpha and omega. And he has thus helped to throw light where the elder metrists have left us in darkness.

One thing, however, I wish the author had omitted—the attempt, even though a modest one (in his short treatment of Weckherlin’s position in German literature), to magnify the poet’s literary importance. How can a *Fürstenknecht*, one who aped the frills of foreign verse and completely neglected all that was *volkstümlich* in his native art, one who tried to introduce the exotic sonnet, elegy, and ode and even helped Marinism into Germany—the agonizing Germany of the Thirty Years’ War—how can such a one be looked on as anything but a detractor? How can we construe his work as a “contribution,” in any sense, to the racial poetic wealth? If such standards of contribution had prevailed, there would have been indeed no room in German art for the Heines, the Schuberts, and the Wagners.

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